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The Fairy and The Witch

BY

A. D. NELSON.

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THE FAIRY AND THE WITCH

An allegorical sketch for Hallowe'en, in which is related the fall of Black Witch and the rise of White Fairy.

By A. D. NELSON.

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PROPERTIES.

One black kettle or cauldron, of iron.

One tripod constructed of rough sticks about 2 inches in diameter and fastened at top by wire, chain or rope from which kettle is hung.

One wand for White Fairy.

One Black Rod for the Witch, to be so constructed that it will break into two pieces at will.

One contrivance for making a light appear in witch's kettle at will.

An organ or piano for music, off stage, if desired where indicated in lines of play.

CHARACTERS.

White Fairy—an older child, female.

Black Witch—adult, female, or an additional effectiveness can be made in the denouement if this be impersonated by a male, speaking in a shrill high-pitched falsetto.

Mirth—First Fairy Messenger, child, male or female.

Jollity—Second Fairy Messenger, child, male or female.

Erebus—Imp of Blackness, child, male or female.

Noctis—Black Fury of Night, child, male or female.

The Children—in any number.

COSTUMES.

Conventional costume for White Fairy; also conventional witch costume for Black Witch with addition of black mask and hood for face and back of head to conceal identity. The witch costume to be so constructed that it can be easily removed.

Fairy Messengers clad in white or some diaphanous drapery of light blue or pink.

Erebus and Noctis costumes, black, armless inverted sacks running from a point above head to a fullness at shoes with eye-holes, etc., cut in proper place.

Children costumes, as they may be dressed.

The Fairy and The Witch.

(Scene: A clearing in the forest, with Witch's kettle suspended on tripod near the Right Front of Stage. No scenery is necessary but an added effectiveness can be secured if play is given out of doors.)

(Enter White Fairy from back of stage, to accompaniment of light, lilting music if desired. White Fairy in pantomime casts spell over region by tripping lightly to right of stage and waving wand, thence over kettle, thence to front, thence to left. Exit White Fairy at rear, music ceases.)

(Enter Black Witch from left, plods toward kettle chuckling fiendishly. Bends over kettle, presumably examining it, then moves towards left across front of stage during reading of lines.)

Black Witch (boastfully) Mistress of this black night am I. Witch and wizard of all the powers of night and darkness I am. Supreme above all good in the Spirit World, tonight on mundane earth. I come to work my spell and my skill in arts malign display. Not all the holy saints, who tomorrow rule the day, can wrest from me my power of night—Hallowe'en! *(in derision)* A hallowed evening! Oh, ho, ho! Ah, ha, ha!! From that proud eminence brought low by me and now decreed to devilish deeds and dark! Thus shall it ever be. *(Calling toward left, off stage.)* Come now my hosts of somber reputation. Make merry! With fell design make we night hideous. Come Owl and hoot for me! *(Listens, no response, calls louder.)* Come Owl! Hoot Owl! *(Owl hoots off stage, left. Aside, chuckling.)* Didst hear the old fool hoot? *(Calling owl)* Come nearer Owl, perch thou upon my shoulder. *(Owl hoots again very faintly. Pleading)* Come Owl, Owl come! *(No response.*

Grows slightly alarmed. Muses) What portends this? Am I now to lose my power as Jove hath so long menaced? Owl has fled and will not come to me. (*Pauses, resumes hopefully*) Ah, well, in my train come others who will heed and answer me. This night Black Witch must have her way!

(*During next lines while calling upon her hosts the Witch moves to and fro calling toward different sections of the region as taste may dictate except as indicated with the lines.*)

Black Witch Black Cat, most common beast of evil augury, what sayest thou? Come forth Black Cat. Let thy penetrating howl echo through the wood. Roost thou upon my back. Come Black Cat, oh! Black Cat come! (*Pauses looks expectantly toward tree, no response. Then muses a trifle sadly.*) Ah! 'tis indeed a night of evil omen when my own Black Cat forsaketh me. (*Turning hopefully*) Raven! Thou bird of sable plumage, bleak and drear, hear thy mistress call. Sound thy raucous note athwart the evening air. Come Raven! bear me company. (*Pauses, no response. Despairingly*) Raven too is gone and will not heed my voice. (*Brightening*) Oh! well, not yet do we despair, with ill intent and fury unabated call we yet others! (*From front center of stage directly facing audience.*) Come snake! sleek-bellied serpent, curse of women, cursed by men, come forth my own beloved. (*Drags point of cane, wiggling, along ground from stage front towards self.*) Start from thy hole, oh! snake of mine. Let thy rattling hisses be heard among the leaves. Coil clammily around me! (*Pauses, no response, resumes furiously*) Seven curses be upon thee, pampered pet of Eve, and thou wilt not come! *Turns away in despair and next calls with rather hopeless air.*) Jackal, night prowler of the forest, hast thou joined this motley crew of renegades? (*Pleadingly*) Heed my voice, oh! Jackal! Prithee leave thy secret lair; come forth! Strike thy eerie call weird and dominant! Soft-footed creep through the forest aisles reposing at my feet. (*Pauses,*

no response, resumes furiously.) Keep to thy den accursed beast forever! Rot and die!

Black Witch (*Musing sadly*) Even yet, methinks, I must rely upon my frisky imps of darkness to aid in this foul festival! (*Again brightens hopefully, exclaims*) But no! But no!

(*At this line Black Witch should be near front of stage at point directly in front of place where Mirth will enter. During next lines Black Witch raises arms aloft in supplication and backs toward place of Mirth's entrance.*)

Black Witch (*Moving backwards, hands aloft in earnest supplication.*) Come, Wind of night! oh, Night Wind come! Thy blasting fury loose upon this world! (*Pauses, drops arms, no response, again muses sadly.*) Ah! Wind of Night, on which I've drifted through the sky these thousand years, hast thou too deserted me? (*Again raises arms aloft and cries in desperation*) Will none come forth to do my will?

(*Enter Mirth, silently, directly behind Black Witch. Remains behind B. W. and out of her sight, dogging her footsteps, poking fun at her, making grimaces, etc*)

Black Witch (*Moving towards kettle soliloquizing brokenly*) Ah, mighty Jove, hast thou delivered me unto mine enemies on this dark night of all dark nights?—some one has cast a spell upon the place and for the moment I am powerless—Aye! for the moment! (*looks at her rod as if conscious of it for the first time*) But I have still my trusty rod of black, and it will yet dispel this impotence oppressive—Though my voice fail this rod will fail me not!

(*Makes passes over kettle with rod and turning slightly catches sight of Mirth.*)

Black Witch (*Rather amused as if White Fairy were a foe of small consequence.*) Ah, ha! White Fairy is now revealed as Jove's agent to work my ruin and she hath sent Mirth, her messenger, to haunt my footsteps and bedevil me! (*chuckles, then calls*) Come

Erebus, Imp of Blackness, come! Make haste and drive this Mirth away.

(*Erebus groans, off stage, left*)

(*Enter Erebus from left, treading slowly and heavily*)

Black Witch What ails thee, Imp of Blackness?

Erebus (*Yawning*) I sleep and cannot wake. My feet drag like lead behind me. (*groans*) My eyes will not open and my body wilts in sleep.

Black Witch (*Musing*) It is the dread fairy spell! (*severely to Erebus*) Cease thy deep grumblings and drive Mirth away from here.

(*Erebus takes after Mirth. Mirth tripping lightly, Erebus dragging himself along heavily.*)

(*Exeunt Erebus and Mirth to back of stage.*)

Black Witch (*Calling, toward left*) Come also Noctis, Black Fury of the night, come too! Speed thee hence. Lend thy brother aid.

(*Enter Noctis, moaning and yawning, also treading heavily as if in a stupor.*)

Noctus (*Lifelessly*) Did call me, mother Witch?

Black Witch (*Sharply*) I did, and art thou also sodden with a heavy stupor?

Noctis (*Trembling*) I am, dread mother Witch. My eyes refuse to open and my feet will not obey my will.

Black Witch (*Impatiently*) Cease thy grumblings and be thankful that you live.

(*Enter Erebus from back moving with crestfallen air towards witch.*)

Black Witch Even now methinks almighty Jove hath delivered this region to White Fairy and our course is run. (*turns to Erebus*) Did Mirth escape thee? (*Erebus bows head*) Sodden Imp! (*to both*) But come, let us brew our witch's brew. Gather around and with mighty magic incantation will we boil a brew to blight the world.

(*Enter Mirth and Jollity from back as Black Witch, Erebus and Noctis move toward kettle. Mirth and Jollity dog footsteps of the three, remaining out of sight poking fun at Witch, etc. Black Witch, Erebus and Noctis begin to spread out around kettle while Black Witch makes few passes with wand. She catches sight of Mirth and Jollity and screeches.*)

Black Witch (*Screeching*) Erebus and Noctis! fly after these unholy imps of light!

Erebus and Noctis pursue Mirth and Jollity, the fairy messengers tripping lightly, Erebus and Noctis following heavily. Exunt, the four, to back of stage.)

Black Witch (*following a few steps*) Fly, fly! Let not your foot-steps laggard be. Capture them and, returning hence, let their bones and flesh serve but to fill the pot. (*Turns toward kettle, chuckling with glee.*) Oh, ho, ho! Ah, ha, ha! Two fairy messengers to grace the witch's brew. Fine will be the scent as their bones are burned and flesh is boiled into the stew! (*Turning*) Erebus and Noctis, fail me not!

(*Enter Erebus and Noctis returning from chase empty handed, from back of stage.*)

Black Witch Didst let them escape thee, dull imps?

Erebus and Noctis (*heads hanging*) Aye, dread mother.

Black Witch (*Beating Erebus and Noctis about shoulders with rod*) Stupid dullards! Worthless laggards! See that ye fail me not again! (*Indignant*) Come with me and gather 'round the cauldron.

(*They move over to kettle and take positions around it. Black Witch makes passes with rod and at signal from Black Witch all three chant chorus of incantation song. The solo stanzas of this song, also the chorus are to be droned out in a slow, sing-song chant, no particular tune or melody desired. Make it as weirdly unmusical and inharmonious as possible, but let the words "get across" distinctly.*)

Chorus (*Black Witch, Erebus and Noctis, while moving around the kettle circling slowly.*)

We're watching the pot and it's going to boil;
The air will get hot and this region will spoil,
But that matters not for we brew witches' oil.

(*Stop circling. Black Witch waves rod. She reaches over and fingers the head of Erebus, tosses hand toward cauldron. Repeats process with Noctis. The three immediately resume circling around kettle while Black Witch sings first stanza in solo.*)

Black Witch (*solo chant*)

1 A louse and a lizard
And two babies fair;
The brains of a pole-cat,
Some coyote's hair;
Animals, reptiles
And birds of the air,
We take of their entrails
And stir them with care.

Chorus (*the three, still circling*)

We're watching the pot and it's going to boil,
The air will get hot and this region will spoil,
But that matters not for we brew witches' oil.

(*All cease circling at conclusion of this chorus. Black Witch to be behind kettle facing audience. Erebus and Noctis on each side. While Black Witch sings next stanza the three sway back and forth but do not circle around.*)

Black Witch (*solo chants*)

2 To those must be added
The element, strife;
Some envy and malice—
The ills of our life—
Vengeance and jealousy,
Backbiting, lies,
All put in the kettle
With things we despise!

(*The three immediately begin circling again and chant chorus.*)

All We're watching the pot and it's going to boil
The air will get hot and this region ———

Black Witch (*Interrupting hysterically and shaking rod menacingly towards Erebus and Noctis in turn.*) Curses upon thee, torpid imps! Canst not chant with thy wonted vim? Let thy voices swell to the far gods, else will sovereign Jove hear us not. Raise thy voices. I command thee!

(*The three resume circling and re-commence the chorus, Erebus and Noctis chanting louder.*)

All We're watching the pot and it's going to boil,
The air will get hot and this region will spoil,
But that matters not for we———

Black Witch (*Interrupting by beating the kettle with rod and screaming furiously*) Curses upon thee, dead! black! pot!!

(*Enter White Fairy at back of stage at word "pot". Fairy raises wand. Light appears inside of kettle as Black Witch beats it, to be so timed that the glow appears at instant White Fairy raises wand.*)

Black Witch (*screaming triumphantly*) Ha! ha! it comes! Light comes—light make fire—come fire—fire come!

White Fairy (*coming forward and interrupting*) Stop! I command thee, stop!

(*Erebus and Noctis shiver, moan and fall prone on the ground, remaining their until told to fly by Black Witch.*)

Fairy (*From position a trifle to the left and back of kettle, gazing steadily at Witch, ignoring imps.*) This night thou art delivered unto me.

Black Witch (*moving toward Fairy*) Not so, not so, loathed Fairy. Though ages old I still am young and thou shalt not prevail.

Fairy (*calmly*) Thy power is gone——

Black Witch (*Interrupting in derision*) Not yet, dear Fairy! (*continues with air of triumph*) See yonder glow in my black pot? With my rod I brought it and it will burn and brighten until thee and thine consumed and parched be, and the whole world blighted. This rod, my power, though it weakened be, is potent still and thou canst do naught against me——

Fairy (*Interrupting with cool hauteur*) That light is mine. I caused it there. Forever it will glow—a a fairy gleam to light and bless the world. Thy power is gone, thy rod is dead.

(*Black Witch begins to laugh scornfully, moves over and gazes into pot, is startled and laugh is choked down.*

Black Witch (*murmuring hopelessly*) 'Tis true. 'Tis true.

(*Black Witch grows afraid, moves away from kettle towards left across front of stage, muttering. Fairy maintains her original position but turns around slowly following movements of Black Witch with her eye. Fairy makes passes with wand toward Black Witch. Black Witch trembles and becomes furiously enraged.*)

Black Witch (*hysterically*) Begone, foul fairy, ere I smite thee dead!

Fairy (*Calmly*) Do thy worst. Thy worst is less than none.

(*Black Witch grows desperate, approaches White Fairy and raises rod to strike her. At this moment B. W. should be to left of Fairy.*)

Black Witch With mine omnipotent rod I kill thee!

(*Fairy smiles, holds forth her wand. Arms of Black Witch become rigid in mid-air.*)

Black Witch (*screaming*) Fly Erebus and Noctis, Imps of Blackness, for your lives make haste! Away! Away!

(*Exunt Erebus and Noctis to back passing to the right and behind Witch and Fairy.*)

White Fairy (*still smiling*) Break rod, rod break!

(*Touches rod with wand, rod breaks.*)

White Fairy (*slightly toward audience*) And thus shall broken be her power forevermore.

(*White Fairy waves her wand toward Black Witch, Black Witch trembles, groans, broken piece of rod falls from her hand.*

Black Witch (*muttering*) 'Tis true. 'Tis true. Jove hath forsaken me and aids this young sprite to do me harm—— (*words trail off into silence as White Fairy continues to wave wand.*)

White Fairy (*Low and rather sadly*) Thy lips are silent now forever. Now thou must sleep—sleep witch, no longer witch.

(*White Fairy continues to wave wand slowly. Black Witch nods head drowsily, wilts into sleep and falls to ground.*

White Fairy Thou hast fallen. A deeper sleep is thine than fell upon the Imps of Blackness. Sleep forever—wake no more!

(*Black Witch exhales one last breath. Dies.*)

White Fairy (*solemnly*) Thine is a sleep eternal. Thou art dead.

(*White Fairy gives one last pitiful look at dead Witch, then turns away smiling.*)

White Fairy (*calling*) Come Mirth and Jollity! Come, children, come.

(*Mirth and Jollity and children, come tripping in with exclamations of childish delight, etc., until they spy the dead Witch; then their cries are hushed, their tripping ceases and they move furtively on tip-toe over to White Fairy glancing up at her for explanations.*)

White Fairy Black Witch is dead. Her power is

gone, and Hallowe'en shall always be a hallowed evening—holy night! redeemed from evil by the power of light. Let men rejoice and women sing. Let children play and dance. This night, henceforth, is sacred to the joys of children.

(*Children clap hands in applause.*)

White Fairy Come! let us dance.

(*Music starts up. Any lively dance song for children such as can be found in any school music book will be suitable here. All clasp hands and begin to circle around kettle, singing and dancing. Music breaks off and all stop singing abruptly in middle of first stanza. Children all glance towards dead Witch then towards Fairy.*)

White Fairy What is it, children?

Mirth Good Fairy, we want no one to die.

White Fairy (*touching Mirth with wand*) Bless you, dear messenger of mine, but the witch is evil and cannot live.

Jollity. Can't you give the witch her life but keep her evil power away from her?

Children (*in unison*) Please good Fairy, restore the Witch's life! Please oh! please.

White Fairy (*pondering*) Your pleas move me. I will restore the witch's life. In Spirit world she can no longer live. A mortal, she must dwell upon the earth.

(*Children cluster in "background" as Fairy goes toward Witch.*)

White Fairy (*touching Witch with wand*) Insensate clay awake! Moved by the tears of children, whom thou hast terrified and wronged, I give thee life. Thou canst no longer dwell with spirits. Wake in mortal form!

Witch begins to show signs of life as White Fairy continues to wave wand.)

White Fairy (*Resuming*) Too long hast thou disgraced thy sex in Spirit World, in mortal life thou shalt assume the guise of man.

(*During preceding lines Witch must unfasten necessary strings, hooks, etc., to allow entire costume to fall off as she rises. Fairy reads next line upon receiving signal from Witch that all is ready.*)

White Fairy (*stepping back and raising wand*) Rise mortal man.

(*Mortal rises, children cheer.*)

White Fairy (*Continuing*) Be grateful for thy life.

Note—If part of Witch is played by female omit this line and change words to feminine gender in following lines where necessary. In the original production the Witch was effectively impersonated by a young man thus bringing out a stronger anti-climax upon restoration to life.

Mortal (*bowing*) I am grateful.

(*Fairy disposes of wand by hanging it on her dress.*)

White Fairy Thy life is due these children. See thou be good to them else will thy life be forfeited to me again. Love them, I command thee.

Mortal (*bowing low and gently kissing Fairy's hand*) I will love them and obey thee, most gracious majesty.

(*White Fairy and Mortal clasp hands and turn toward audience.*)

White Fairy Thus ever shall the powers of night and darkness be dispelled.

Mortal And good will triumph over evil everywhere.

(*They bow to audience and to each other.*)

White Fairy Will dance with us, my Lord?

Mortal Your majesty doth honor me.

(*All join hands circling around kettle and sing dance song. Organ glides into march at end. All march off, Fairy and Mortal in lead, then Mirth and Jollity, followed by children. Exunt all.*)

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